

JUDITH'S GIFT TO HER EDITOR

Drawings by Wilson Dexter

BY ANNE SHANNON MONROE

AND so this," said the editor with a disgusted shrug as Judith stood her dripping umbrella in the rack, "is the best Puget Sound can do for Christmas weather! Ugh!"

"Christmas," came back Judith, busy with her damp gloves, "is a matter of the heart, not of the weather."

"Yes?" with a cynical but willing-to-be-informed lifting of the brows.

"I passed little boys racing through the rain with arms full of holly, whose faces shone with Christmas spirit."

"But they were little boys," with the emphasis on the "little."

"My mother is chattering about the house over her wreaths and mysterious parcels; and Sam is full of it, planning gifts for his girl. He's a big boy,—as big as you."

"But not so old and wise."

"Not so old—no."

"Score one, Princess!" The very good looking editor smiled quizzically at his small, alert reporter, who now stood by his desk, her gray rain cap pushed back exposing unruly curls, her wet cape tossed jauntily over her shoulder, a flaring red silk tie beneath her small, pointed chin the one note of color to relieve the drabness of the rainy day costume. He smiled; but there was wistfulness in his face, a tone of yearning back of the bantering. "No one is making a gift for me, Princess. Won't you make me a little Christmas gift so I shall be in it tomorrow too?"

Judith looked quickly away. The undertone touched into life something that lay deep buried, something that, throbbing back, sent color to her cheeks, and softness to her eyes.

"Indeed I will," she answered, trying to make her voice light, "if I can think of anything that will really please you."

"Oh, one isn't supposed to be pleased with a Christmas present, Princess. Of course I don't expect to like the thing; but I shall like the thought. Isn't that the prescribed point of view?"

"I don't give that kind," Judith retorted, lifting her independent little chin in the air, at the same time opening her notebook. "If I give you anything at all, you will like it."

He smiled again, and continued to contemplate her so deliberately that the young girl, embarrassed, prompted him, "You left word for me to report the moment I came in."

YES." He drew forward his green eyeshade, the lines in his strong old-young face settled, and he became all the editor, a personality with which no employee took liberties. "It's about Helen Wor—Mrs. Sloane."

Judith sat down quickly and leaned toward him. Fresh trouble for Helen? What could it be? The whole town had been shocked a month earlier when Helen Worthington, a beautiful and popular society girl, married, unknown to her family, Dan Sloane, a common, ignorant miner who had returned from Alaska reputedly with vast wealth. The man had been a two weeks' laughingstock of the town, buying huge diamonds and fantastic clothes, throwing handfuls of nuggets into crowds, and otherwise making a sensational display of his money. How Helen, protected on every hand, had met the man in the first place, how she had brought herself to marry him, and why, had kept the tongues buzzing ever since. A year earlier she had been engaged to a dashing army officer; but the engagement had been broken.

Helen had not confided in Judith, though the girls were lifelong friends; but Judith had been sure the fault was neither Helen's nor the young man's. And then her editor had been seen with the beautiful society girl to an extent that caused their names to be frequently linked in gossiping guessing. Judith came to believe that Helen cared; at least sufficiently to consider him. He



She could see that Helen was awake; but the poor girl gave no sign.

was uncommonly good looking in a strong, massive, masculine way,—oh, he had his "points"—but he was not rich. Judith believed that Helen's mad act had followed her parents' opposition to this second love. Helen had a strain of Spanish blood. She was good hearted; but impulsive and hot tempered. Mrs. Worthington, long in poor health, had died of the shock, and Worthington had not become reconciled to his daughter.

Helen had gone with the man she had married to a hunter's lodge in a great timber belt some miles from town. His parents lived on the place, and there were workmen. Sloane was known to be given to sprees, at which times he was ugly. Everyone shuddered at the unprotected state the girl's folly had brought her to, shuddered—and speculated on how long it would last.

"Late yesterday afternoon came the dénouement," the editor spoke dryly. "Sloane was drowned."

Judith waited, lips apart, eyes strained, for the editor to go on, while there raced through her mind, "Now Helen can marry whom she pleases!" The tumult raised within her own schooled and controlled being startled her as much as did the news.

"The senior Sloanes, it appears," went on the editor in his crisp, informative way, "are rather a bad lot, intent on getting the son's money. They came in late last night with the body. They talked freely and brutally of their son's widow. They claim that the two had quarreled violently, that she was with him when he was drowned, that she stood on the bank—by her own confession—and watched him struggle and go down without making the slightest attempt to assist him. They say that timber cutters were less than twenty feet away, and would have heard an outcry from her; they

say that if his will leaves everything to her, it will be the last necessary bit of evidence against her. To make matters worse, Mr. Worthington has been declared bankrupt. It seems he has been on the verge of a break for over a year. This—ah—makes some things plain—apparently." His voice was very dry.

"And I am to—"

"We've got to handle it. 'The Union' will take the senior Sloanes' side and make the most of it,—the moneyed class on the backs of the poor, and so on. If you can get a straight, coherent story from Hel—Mrs. Sloane of the whole day's doings and an account of the drowning that will explain, convincingly, her attitude—well, it's the only course left."

"Where is Helen?"

"At the ranch. She has seen no one. I sent Henson out last night; but he telephoned an hour ago that it was useless to stay any longer. Three other reporters were there; but they were all leaving. You must get into her room and make her realize the importance to her of giving you a straight, reasonable story. You see that quarrel—and then the old folks say that Sloane had not been home all night. I admit it looks bad; but I don't believe—"

"Nor I." Judith rose. "How do I go?"

He gave her instructions; then, queerly for him, he put out his hand. It was a compact,—she was to clear Helen!

MONTHS before, when Judith had finally made up her mind that her editor really did love Helen, she had trampled underfoot the dreaming young self that cried out for romance. She had tried to live impersonally since, and for her work. She was learning to write; she was forging suffering

into art; she was putting strength into her characterizations, actuality into her descriptions, an ache into her "sob" stories. She was fast losing her schoolgirl prettiness of expression, and gaining a style that gripped. And at the same time she was carving out a character of her own. Something real had been forming under the surface girlishness and softness; something vital had begun to grow out of pain and experience. The dreaming, joyous young thing who had insisted a year earlier on being allowed to become a newspaper woman was becoming a woman.

Now, as she hurried toward the boat, she went back over the years. She and Helen had been devoted playmates before her father died, when her own future as a brilliant society girl beckoned as hopefully as did Helen's. They had been devoted schoolmates at the old academy where Laetona's "best girls" were educated. And then their ways had parted. Helen had entered upon a life of gaiety with a world of men at her feet; Judith had become an earner. And for her there had been but one man—and Helen had made that one man all but an impossibility—and then she had married—and the one man had no longer seemed quite altogether impossible. But now Helen was free: she was to be back in their lives again!

She, Judith, was actually hurrying through the rain to focus all her painfully acquired insight into life and motives, all her painfully acquired power as a writer, on Helen's case, that she might come back—unblemished. A sudden new intense hatred for Helen flared up in Judith like a tongue of flame.

She went aboard the small tramp steamboat that carried groceries around the Puget Sound waterfront, and being chilled tried the cabin; but the air was suffocating. She went outside, and finding a seat near the rail, gazed across the waste of gray water to the rim of somber fir trees, eternally motionless. Somewhere in that solemn forest was Helen, alone with her story.

THE boat had chugged along for several hours when the purser touched her shoulder. She rose and crossed a narrow plank to a rudely improvised dock. No

one was in sight. The boat chugged on, and Judith started up a narrow trail. Huge fir trees dripped on each side; a dense undergrowth of ferns and bracken, fresh washed, shone in its rich, dark green. The forest held little life. She heard no singing birds, she saw no squirrels: just stillness, an awful, ominous, oppressive stillness. She followed the silent trail deeper into the dark woods. She ran, and presently, all out of breath, she came upon a clearing in the center of which stood an imposing structure built of immense logs. Smoke slowly ascended against the damp air from a single chimney. She stopped and knocked on the rough slab-wood door.

Heavy steps slowly crossed a bare floor within, and the door was opened. A ranch woman stood there, broad of face, heavy of body, but young and wholesome appearing.

"I am a friend of Mrs. Sloane's," Judith said. "Tell her Judith Wells is here."

"She won't see you," the woman replied, not asking her in. "She won't see anyone."

"She must!" Judith protested. "We have been like sisters since we were babies."

"Sure you're not a reporter?"

Judith winced. Before she could frame a reply the woman spoke again.

"There's a return boat at the upper dock in an hour. Two others from Seattle have gone to get it. You'd better take it too."

"You mean the best in the world," Judith said, "and I appreciate what you are trying to do for Mrs. Sloane; but it is best for her that I stay."

Something boiled over on the kitchen stove, and the woman, with the concern of the good cook,—which she looked to be, every inch of her,—turned and hurried to the kitchen. Judith stepped in, hung her cap and cape on a peg back of the door, then sat down before the open fire and put out her feet to dry. Presently the woman returned. Seeing Judith so perfectly at home, she was disarmed. Possibly she was glad, too, to share the responsibility, after she had done her best to carry out instructions.

"She's awful bad," she began, taking a chair opposite and beginning to rock. "I'd have a doctor, if I had my way."

"Hysteria?"

"She lays and clutches tight to the bedding, and

won't say anything but 'Don't let anyone in, Jenny!' That's all her fear,—of people coming."

It went through Judith like a flash—could it be possible? Her Spanish blood—her hotheadedness! But instantly she dismissed the thought. Helen might strike in a passion; but she could not deliberately do a real wrong. They talked on.

The woman gave such details as she knew of the drowning. She told how one of the ranch hands had come up the trail from the river carrying the body,—the water being shallow and clear, he had got it almost immediately,—and of finding Helen prostrate on the ground by the bank; of how she had carried her forcibly to the house and put her to bed; and how she had refused to move or talk or eat since.

"I've cooked the best the house affords three times and carried it up to her," she added ruefully, "and never a bite has she swallowed!"

"Of course she must eat," said Judith, seizing on the woman's chief weakness—or strength, as the case might be. "You fix up a nice tray for the two of us—it's nearly noon—and I'll carry it to her. Maybe she will eat with me. Many's the time we've had our bibs tied on and our bowls of bread and milk together."

The passion of the born cook overcame the woman's last scruples. She went to the kitchen, and soon there was a great slapping about of pans and broilers. When she finally brought in the tray there rested on it a couple of broiled squabs, a stack of golden toast, and a pot of steaming tea. She nodded to Judith, and started toward the broad stairway. Judith followed. The woman paused before a door on the upper balcony, put the tray in Judith's hands, then pushed open the door, closing it after her.

JUDITH stood within a huge, bare room, in the far corner of which was a bed, where Helen lay, face downward, a crumpled heap.

She set down the tray and went over to the bed. Helen lay motionless as one dead. She picked up a brush and began to smooth out her heavy mass of matted hair. She could see that Helen was awake; but she gave no sign, probably mistaking her for the housekeeper. Judith continued her task till the mass of purple black hair lay in smooth strands; then she divided it and made two long braids. She pulled off her flaming tie, tore it in two, and made bright bows just above the paint brush ends, as Helen's hair had always been done when a child. She tiptoed across the room, secured a mirror, and coming back slipped her arm round the limp body and by a sudden twist turned Helen and held the mirror before her eyes.

"Childhood days, Nelly," she cried gaily, trying to laugh; but at sight of the pinched white face she dropped into sobbing. Every emotion died in her but her oldtime love for this playmate who was now so troubled. The tears came to Helen's eyes, and the two girls cried together, until at last, from sheer weakness, Helen became quiet, save for long, dry, shivery sobs that racked her body.

Judith picked up one of the squabs and tore it in two. "Eat it with me," she begged, drawing Helen to a sitting posture.

Helen took a fragment and made an effort to eat; but a few bites and the poor girl could not go on. She dropped her head against Judith's shoulder and implored her not to leave. She seemed to have forgotten everything but that here at last out of the awful blackness had appeared a friend. The realization

swept over Judith that Helen trusted her implicitly. Oh, if only she might stay on as her friend! If only there was no newspaper, no editor! But she must get her story—as a friend. She must worm her way into Helen's confidence to satisfy the thousands of curiosity seekers—but then, too, she was also serving her friend. All these reflections raced through her mind as she held Helen in her arms and soothed and comforted her. Time was an object, too. She must get the six o'clock boat back—with the story. She must get Helen out of bed, stop her brooding, and make her talk. She looked across to the cheerless fireplace.

"Don't leave me!" the poor girl pleaded, clutching tightly.

"I won't, Dear; but I'm freezing. Just a moment."

She called down the stairs to the housekeeper, and soon had a blazing log on the hearth. She tidied up the room,—Jenny was a better cook than chambermaid,—and found a woolly dressing gown and some slippers. She made Helen put them on; then, pulling up a great leather chair, half carried the protesting girl to it. She crowded down beside her, and they put their feet out to the flames. How often as children they had sat thus on a rainy afternoon intent over a fairy story! Poor Helen! She looked like a child now with her long braids and her mournful black eyes; just as she had looked the time she had typhoid fever so many years ago.

Judith talked of childish things. "Do you remember the day we broke Blanche's head, and there wasn't any glue to mend her, and you cried so? And old Nancy made us some gingerbread dolls to comfort us? I've often wondered how she made it. I've tried all the recipes I can find, and mine never tastes like hers."

At last Helen's face relaxed, she let her head fall on Judith's breast, the chair swayed gently, the warmth enfolded her, and she slept. Judith maintained her cramped position. If only Helen could rest, she might dare talk to her of the tragedy; but in her present mood she must keep her mind off it.

WHEN she opened her eyes at last she looked up with a happy smile; but almost instantly realization came over her and her face became troubled again.

"Nelly darling, tell me all about it. You'll feel better to get it off your mind. Tell me everything that happened all day."

"Oh, Judie, it was horrible!"

"It won't be so horrible with two to share it."

"We had quarreled dreadfully the evening before," she began. "It was awful. His mother and father took his part, and that made him worse, and he struck off into the woods after saying he would never come back. He was so jealous, Judie! He wanted me all alone—that was why he brought me to this place. He couldn't bear for me to speak to another man. He didn't know—oh, Judie, it's horrible!—but he didn't know enough not to be jealous of the ranch hands. You know we were always taught to be polite to servants; but if I so much as spoke a pleasant good morning to one of them he would go into a black rage."

"I told him that day that he would make me hate him, and that I would leave him, if he didn't stop being suspicious. And I didn't hate him, Judie; for he did love me just for myself. He knew I wouldn't have any money,—I told him so,—but he wanted just me. I had always been so afraid of being married for my money. You see my people were so anxious for me to marry money that I supposed everyone else was equally crazy on the subject. Well, poor Dan wasn't a bit. He didn't care a rap for money: it was all just me."

"And so I got up early yesterday morning,—it was a sunny day,—and I thought I would go for a long walk and try to think things out alone. I came across him sitting on a great log looking so white and desolate,—he'd been there all night,—and the first thing I knew I was in his arms begging him to try to understand me. We talked a long time, and I tried to make him see that a woman of my class couldn't flirt with a servant, a ranch hand. He reminded me that I had married a man who had been worse. Then I began to get his viewpoint, and little by little got into sympathy with him; for, Judie, he did love me. If you could have seen his eyes when he looked at me—when he wasn't jealous, I mean! And I promised never to make him unhappy again. And to celebrate he proposed that we spend the whole day alone in the woods. So he went to the house for a lunch and—oh, yes, I called to him to bring my camera, and we set off."

"Judie, I haven't been so happy in months; for he was so happy, and his eyes shone so when he looked at me. He seemed so elemental and real! He loved the woods, and he loved me, and we played like children. We Robinson Crusoe'd, and he called me his man Friday, and we built a stove of stones, and broiled bacon for lunch. And then we began getting pictures. He would perch me high in the boughs and snap me, or we'd pose like two birds on a limb and fix the camera so we could snap ourselves; and we laughed and played all day among the things he could understand. I tell you, Judie, a man like that understands a lot about life that we artificial society people miss altogether. We just gossip our lives away while a man like that lives. What

Jenny conducted her to the spot where the dire tragedy occurred.

if it is rough? It is life, it is not playing at life, or imitating life: it's real."

Judith waited; but fearing too much loss of time, she prompted Helen. "Go on, Dear. The drowning—how did it happen?"

With a shiver the girl again took up the narrative. "Along late in the afternoon we came to the place in the river where the Indians fish; and—oh, Judie, whatever possessed me to do it I don't know, but I said, 'There's a good picture, that old dugout canoe with the riffles in the background; only there's no life in it.' Dan would do anything to please me, and quick as a flash he came back, 'I'll put some life in it,' and before I realized what he was about he had sprung into the boat and pushed off toward the riffles. I leveled my camera; but he called back, 'Wait!' so I held my finger ready to press, and he added, 'I'll give you a thrilling one!' With that he went overboard. I was startled, but not alarmed, as he was a good swimmer, and was called one of the most daring men in Alaska. So I just held my breath, and waited, and in a moment his head appeared, and he called something—I thought it was 'Now!'—and clutched for the canoe. And I snapped

him; then carefully rolled off the film. When I looked up again he was not in sight, and the old boat had drifted into the rapids. I thought he was making for the bank higher up,—there was a bend in the river,—and I ran up and down and called him; but—I—never saw him again—till—till they brought his body, all dripping!"

"What did you do, Nelly dear? I mean right away. Did you call for help?"

"No. One of the ranch hands was cutting timber near, and he heard me call Dan. He came out and answered me; said he hadn't seen Dan all day. He thought I was looking for him. I just pointed to the river—I couldn't speak—I couldn't!"

"And then?"

"The next I remember Jenny brought me home." She closed her eyes and lay back with a shudder.

Judith's arms held her tenderly, closely; but her eyes went on a search about the room. Where was the camera with its corroborating films? She must find the camera, and time was passing, and there was the six o'clock boat. She began to rock and softly to stroke Helen's head, singing to her meantime, as to a sleepy

child. Her efforts were at last rewarded, and she stole quietly down the stairs.

"She's asleep," she confided to Jenny, who seemed much relieved. "Do you know where she left her camera?"

"She's got a darkroom upstairs. Like's not it's up there where she had it last."

Judith found the darkroom; but the camera was not there. She went on a still hunt through the other rooms; but without results. Undoubtedly she had left it in the woods. She returned to Jenny, and asked that now wholly acquiescent person to show her the river where Sloane was drowned. The woman gladly conducted her to the spot.

"I'm going to walk about awhile," Judith said. "You had better go back. Mrs. Sloane might wake and want something."

Alone she began a careful examination of the ground. Ten chances to one the films were ruined if the camera had been out in the weather the last twenty-four hours; but the one chance was worth working for. She looked everywhere. She had about concluded to renew the

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CHRISTMAS POSTOFFICE VAGARIES

Drawing by Rodney Thomson

BY RALPH EATON

DO you ever use Santa Claus or Christmas stamps on your packages?

How would you feel, then, if, a week after mailing a gift bearing one of those stamps, you should meet your friend, and have her repulse your cordial greeting with a certain coldness, and later answer your inquiry about the gift with the remark that she had never received it?

And then how would you feel later when, on going to the postoffice for an explanation of the non-delivery, you should be catechised so:

Was the address correct? Was the package weighed, and the necessary stamps put upon it? Did it bear a return address? Did you put any writing or additions on the package apart from the address?

How would you feel, I say, if, after your reply that the package had been fully stamped, and that there was no writing or addition upon it, unless a little Christmas stamp near the postage stamps was one, you should be met with the answer, "Well, Madam, that Christmas stamp is responsible for your difficulty? It makes a package unmailable if it is placed anywhere on the address side. If, however, in spite of the Christmas stamp, your package had borne a return address, it would have been returned to you, and you would have simply lost the stamps cancelled in the transaction. Without the return address, the package will be sent to the Dead Letter Office. If no address appears on a card inside, you will never hear from it again."

Here may be trouble enough, all because of an innocent looking, well meaning, little Christmas stamp.

Are the George Washingtons and the Ben Franklins of the postoffice stamps so jealous of old Santa Claus that they will not share the same side of a package with him? It seems so; although we learn from the postman that we may put the Christmas stamps on the back of the packages, provided those stamps do not too closely resemble the regular postage stamps. On the back of packages! Indeed, why humble old Santa Claus so? Why does Uncle Sam frown on him?

The explanation is simple. Because those Christmas stamps, made, as they often are, to look for all the world like postage stamps, confuse and delay the post-office clerks when they are examining, weighing, and cancelling the postage of packages that come tumbling, crowding, jostling for attention, during the holiday rush.

Uncle Sam, out of sheer desperation and consideration for his faithful workers, must save their time and their patience; for the work of the postoffice clerk is most nerve racking just when everyone else is seemingly care free.

Several foreign countries—Austria, Norway, and Portugal among them—refuse to deliver at all any letters or packages with Christmas stamps on them. Other foreign countries—among them Germany and Great Britain, like our own—allow Christmas stamps on the back of letters and packages. Speaking of foreign mail, perhaps you who have friends to remember in Germany do not know what is necessary to get letters on the fastest ships. You know that there is now a rate of two cents an ounce for letters to Germany, as well as

to Great Britain. But do you know that the low rate to Germany does not provide that letters be carried on the fastest ships? To obtain such an advantage for mail to Germany, you must pay the old rate of five cents a half-ounce; and besides it is well to mark a letter so sent with the words, "By fastest ship."

You say you use Santa Claus or Christmas stamps on your packages? How would you feel if you knew that a book sent to someone whom you would hesitate to offend had been charged up with three or four times the postage you had put upon it, all because you had put a "Merry Christmas" or "Happy New Year" sticker or seal right over the string that held the package together? Imagine paying letter postage on a book or the average package of merchandise!

Here again Uncle Sam frowns for very good reason. You have prevented his men from opening and examining without breaking the sticker or seal, and they have assumed that you are quite willing to pay the additional charge, or have your friend do so, all perhaps because you have written such a message on the card inclosed as would convert the whole into a personal message. The package form is merely a disguise for this aristocrat of the postoffice,—for that is what a letter is,—and it has to pay for its better care and carriage accordingly.

"No such thing!" perhaps you would say or think. "I did not try to deceive or to cheat anyone, much less Uncle Sam. I did not know he was so particular about how those stickers or seals should be put upon



Rodney Thomson.

packages, or that a few words I wrote, either because of what I said, or where I wrote them, would convert the package into a letter."

Who would dare impugn your motive? But the higher rates of postage put upon your package were due to a rule of the postoffice that cannot take individuals into consideration. All are treated alike, and you cannot beg off on the ground that you did not know the rule, because all are presumed to know the rules.

Matter that is closed against inspection, regardless of how little value it is, or of the reasons for sending it so, is technically first-class matter, and postage is reckoned in multiples of two-cent stamps, the red-coated signs of aristocracy. Packages are in the lower classes, and postage for them is reckoned in multiples of one-cent stamps, the green-coated badges of inferiority.

If, then, you would send at merchandise or book rates (there is a difference between them), your packages with stickers or seals on them must have the wrapping strings free; not only actually free, but apparently free. The place for the stickers or seals is away from the strings, and away from the folds of the packages, so that the package may clearly be easily opened and examined.

If you have never been privileged to visit behind the scenes of a great metropolitan postoffice at holiday time, you would be amazed at the cold, thorough way the postal clerks undo strings and pry into the contents. And you would be still more amazed at the nature of some of those contents.

We have spoken of writing in a package that might be considered a letter. In books, and on photographs and other matter entirely in print mailed at the low rates, you may write such words as "My dear friend," "Sincerely yours," "Merry Christmas," "Happy New Year," "With best wishes," or words to the same effect; but unless you wish to run the risk of additional postage, and a fine, you must not try to convert the greeting into a note or letter, telling for instance about some member of the family coming home for the holidays, and your plans, and so on. Nor may you put such matter on the outside of the package. All that is permissible there is "Book," "Periodical," "Printed Matter," "Photo," and "Do not open until Christmas" (or New Year's).

There is one exception to what we have said, and it applies to books and printed matter. On the cover or the blank leaves you may write a simple dedication not in the nature of personal correspondence. Or, if you wish, you may put such matter on a card, and inclose it with the book or gift in question. This also applies to miscellaneous merchandise, which may be mailed, when Uncle Sam's rules are observed, at parcel post rates. On the outside of the package should, however, be written the appropriate designation, such as "Candy," "Cigars," and so on, or, and perhaps preferably, simply "Merchandise."

But don't forget about the place you must put the Santa Claus or Christmas stamps, and don't so tie the package that it cannot be readily opened and examined.

THE BOOMERS

(Continued from page 12)

financial success. It requires thought and industry, Sir. The human mind is so constituted that it must specialize. That is the secret, my young friend. Specialize! Look at me, Sir! Before I started out to make my everlasting fortune I specialized. I read, I studied finance. I learned how the other members of finance had conducted themselves, Sir. It is to that preparation I owe my success. 'Lives of great men all remind us, we can make our lives sublime, and departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.'

He quoted in his mellifluous voice, standing there with one hand on his heart, and his eyes upraised, and at the "footprints on the sands of time" he opened his graceful fingers and looked down at the beach, and seemed writing footprints with them, much to Lester's quiet amusement.

"As soon," said the Colonel, "as my charming daughter, Miss Arabella, arrives with our modest possessions, including my library, I shall take pleasure, Mr. Lester, in lending you some of these masterpieces regarding finance, provided you are at all thinkin' of specializing in that line."

"I should be delighted, Colonel Hatch," dryly assented Lester, who, so far as anyone could see, had no idea of ever doing more than dawdling as the means of a very modest man might permit. "But about this city, Colonel—do I understand that today is the great day when the excursionists are to come?"

"Today is the day," solemnly asserted the Colonel.

EVEN as he spoke they heard in the distance the sound of a steamer's whistle, and the mellowed puffing of her exhaust. The Colonel was transfixed with excitement, as he strained his eyes looking down the long, broad, placid reach of one of the most beautiful spots in the world. A smudge appeared round a long point of low land, forest clad, that concealed the next stretch of the sound. The exhaust was plainer now. It steadily increased in volume. Suddenly, round the curving point, the bow of a white sound steamer showed itself, enlarged, and, gay with bunting and flags and signs, the excursion boat swung proudly into view, and a half-mile distant headed into the placid bay. A cracked and wheezy brass band suddenly broke itself into pieces by playing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," and the watchers saw that the boat's decks were black with people who had taken advantage of this opportunity for a free outing.

Standing stodgily on the steamer's bridge beside the Captain was the unmistakable figure of Burmah Jones, this time with his silk hat on the extreme rear of his head, and smoking a full length cigar, and as the boat approached the Colonel observed with much approval that Burmah had donned a frock coat for the occasion.

The boat came to the newly finished landing, and as the gangplank was thrown out two or three men began receiving packages and mysterious boxes. The Colonel was informed that these were professional clam-bakers who had been hired to go up to the top of the hill and make a spread.

"Most amazin'," said the Colonel, "what my friend Jones does think up!"

But he had small time for reflection; for out came a laughing, elated crowd of excursionists. Burmah Jones watched them speculatively from his vantage point, much as a nice fat lion might watch a flock of lambs, good naturedly marking and selecting those he proposed to devour. He came down to accept the Colonel's congratulations.

"Some of them, Sir, look like representative citizens," crooned the Colonel.

"And the rest like a bunch of yeggmen," added Burmah. But he failed to state to the Colonel that for a small stipend this same bunch of yeggmen, properly trained, were to be the "boosters" for the bidding, and that he had worked with them overnight teaching them "stop" and "start" signals. He was a thorough believer in organization.

"Where's Hubbard?" he demanded.

The Colonel's face sobered and he looked aggrieved. "That young man, Sir, is wasting his time at this moment making pen and ink drawings of what this city's to look like, and what's more he says you told him to."

Burmah disarmed this resentment with a laugh. "Sure I did," he said unhesitatingly. "You see, Colonel, folks like to know how it's possible for things to look. Besides, you see, it might look that way, after all, if you just turn your mind to it. You don't suppose old Pullman laid out his town without some plans, do you? Why, I should say not! I was sure that's just what you'd want Hubbard to do."

"And so I did," unblushingly assented the Colonel, taking back tracks with agility. "The very minute he told me what he was doing I let him alone."

"Then," said Burmah, "I'd better go over to his tent and see how he's comin' on."

And he hurried away, leaving the Colonel feeling as lonesome and helpless for the moment as it was possible to be.

AT the tent Burmah stopped, took off his coat, shouted, "Come out here, Hubbard!" and unrolled his bundle. It proved to be a big cloth banner, and fifteen minutes later it was stretched on poles beside the tent, where anyone could read in red, "Engineer's headquarters."

Burmah spared just one minute to look at the partly completed sketches, told Hubbard not to be so careful and to "hustle them to a finish," and waddled off up the hillside. Already, under the shade of a clump of fine old trees, the clam-bakers were at work. A huge vat had been planted on stones, into it had gone a heavy layer of clams, and now, on top of it, the chef, in white apron and cap, was placing the white muslin sacks containing chickens and sweet potatoes, lobsters and sweet corn, while a man fed the fire beneath. Out at a little distance other adepts were placing collapsible tables and making benches. Another man was sorting cutlery and plates, and still another was heaping great loaves of bread on a table, preparatory to slicing them.

The sounds of a hammer called Burmah, and he hurried to another part of the knoll, where men were making a platform. Two boys with bundles of flags under their arms were going over the surveyed ground, planting a red flag beside each stake, and in the center of each lot a placard bearing a number. Burmah sent one of them hurriedly down the hill to get a plat from Hubbard, and when the boy returned mounted the half constructed platform and tacked up a huge, crude drawing, showing "Main Street." It was so large that it could be seen from many yards away. He climbed down from the platform and ordered that each member of the little band should be given a bottle of claret, and thereby gained the musicians' approval. He stopped long enough to cut a staff for a decrepit old man who was wandering aimlessly around, and thereby won that man's regard. He laughed, joked, told stories, or discussed the weather with different men he met. He was ubiquitous, he was entertaining. He radiated good will, and made a friend of every man he met. He would have attempted back and fore somersaults if he had thought that they would put anyone in good humor. Sweat streamed from his face, and his coat was on his arm, his collar wilted, a handkerchief thrust into his neckband, and his patent leather shoes were white with mountain dust.

And it was Burmah Jones, indefatigable, who got the chef's signal that the meal was prepared, and then ordered the cornetist of the band to blow "Assembly" as a bugle call until all the excursionists were seated. He took no time to eat of that savory mess; but bustled around to see that the food was served and that no man's glass should be left empty for an instant. Claret, the heaviest he had been able to buy, was to flow like water. "Warm 'em up!" was his motto.

To be continued next Sunday

JUDITH'S GIFT

(Continued from page 9)

search at the house, when a lone squirrel scampered by with a pine nut for his stores. She watched him—he went into a hollow tree. She followed, idly curious—and there was the camera, put away, possibly, by one of the hands and then forgotten.

Judith ran back to the house and stole up to the darkroom. She and Helen had had the kodak craze together as they had the measles, and she could develop the films very readily. If only they would corroborate Helen's story! She went to work—and two hours later had a dozen splendid films, each showing a different view of a man and a maid, gipsying together in the woods. Helen appeared radiant with young life. She was hatless, and her wilful hair flew about her merry face. She typified joyous abandonment to a nature mood. The man was more sober of mien; but he was hopelessly the indulgent bridegroom, bent on pleasing. The last picture, the one of the drowning, showed his head perfectly, and a hand clutching at the decayed canoe.

Judith, all excitement, didn't wait to print the pictures; but slipped the films

\$500 in Prizes

to the boys and girls making the best record of development in the

Ralston BOYS and GIRLS Development Contest

HERE is a contest that will interest you. Every mother gets a prize, in a well-developed child, and maybe a cash prize, besides.

It is a simple, straightforward contest—easy to enter. Just measure the children and weigh them at your grocer's, fill out the entry blanks and send them to us, with the top of a Ralston Wheat Food package (either 10c or 15c size) for each child entered—then give the children all the Ralston Wheat Food they want, and watch them develop. Enter all the boys and girls in the family, 1 to 14 years old. If one doesn't get a prize another may. Ask your grocer for entry blank, or send to us for one.

First Prize \$100, Second Prize \$50, Third \$25, Fourth \$15, Fifth \$10, Twenty \$5 Prizes and Two Hundred \$1 Prizes.

The 225 children who, in the opinion of the judges, make the best record of development will get the prizes. In case of a tie the prize will be divided

carefully into a white photographic envelop, which she crowded into her bag, then crept softly downstairs. Helen was still asleep.

SHE was almost the only passenger on the little grocery boat; so she had the cabin to herself. Across her copy paper flew her swift, coarse editor's pencil, as she pictured this crowning happy day of days for the young married pair, when, to please his bride, the man had arranged all sorts of pictures, his zeal reaching its climax in the river scene, which, through some strange miscalculation of rocks or rapids, had proved fatal. Judith told the story simply, directly, convincingly. It was the best work she had ever done. It saved Helen.

It was late when she reached town. The streets were full of tardy Christmas shoppers hurrying home under umbrellas with full arms and happy faces; but Judith had no time to think of Christmas. The story must be in, the films printed, the halftones made for the morning paper. It meant everything to have your story first. You could never successfully change a wrong impression.

The editor was waiting. Tonight he looked tired and depressed. There had been a big Christmas annual to get out with a colored supplement, and he had had his worries. He merely held out his hand for the story. Judith gave it to him, then began to tug at the thick white envelop in her bag.

"My Christmas present?" he asked with languid interest, and an effort at a smile as he saw the flat envelop.

His Christmas present! Judith had forgotten all about her promise. But what could be better than this,—the proof of Helen's white soul? A moment and the color left her face as the real meaning of it all swept over her with fresh poignancy; then she smiled bravely and lifted her proud, pointed little chin.

"Yes—your Christmas present!" She was gone.

Another Judith Story will appear in an early issue.

equally. Any boy or girl may enter, up to December 31, 1914. Late entrants will be on an equality with early ones, as length of time and age of contestants will be considered in awarding prizes. Contestants are not limited to a Ralston Wheat Food diet, but the more Ralston they eat the more they will develop.

Development Chart

Contest closes March 31, 1914, when children should again be measured and weighed at your grocer's, and result blank sent in at once, with tops of all Ralston packages used. Result blanks received after April 6th will not be considered. The records of prize winners will be investigated to prevent mistakes and misstatements.

The selection of prize winners will be made according to rules followed by authorities on child development, and will be final.

Announcement of prize winners will be made in *The Saturday Evening Post* of May 30th.

Mothers! Ask for This Chart

Shows height, weight and measurements of average boy and average girl, 1 to 14 years old. Contains many helpful suggestions about diet and care of children, and has tape line attachment for accurately measuring them. Also place for recording yearly weight and measurements of entire family. Every mother should have one. Write for your free chart today.

Ralston WHEAT FOOD

makes children sturdy

It contains the very elements that build flesh, bone and muscle—a wholesome, solid whole wheat food of natural wheat color and flavor, with all the nutriment of the whole wheat left in.

It's just the kind of food your doctor would recommend for building up strong constitutions.

MOST economical—one cup makes a breakfast for six. Two sizes, 10c—15c.

Get a package today and give the boys and girls a start and the whole family a treat. It's delicious.

If your grocer doesn't sell Ralston Wheat Food send us 15c and his name and we will send you a 15c package, postpaid (East of the Rockies in U.S.). We will ask your grocer to order Ralston so that you will have equal chance with others in the development of your children.



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